

able officials and vice chairman of the OPIC Board. Current law requires that the Administrator of the Agency for International Development [AID] and the U.S. Trade Representative [USTR] or the Deputy USTR to serve on the board in these positions. This reform would allow the executive branch to appoint individuals who could best serve OPIC without having their time and attention devoted to their other important duties.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me and the 34 other Members from both sides of the aisle in helping to reform and reauthorize OPIC by cosponsoring H.R. 2064.

IN HONOR OF FATHER IBRAHIM
IBRAHIM

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 26, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Father Ibrahim of St. Elias Church in Cleveland, OH, on the 10th anniversary of his ordination into the priesthood.

Father Ibrahim was born in a small village in South Lebanon. There, he attended school and entered the Seminary of Saint Savior of the Basilian Salvatorian Order. He took his first religious vows in 1980, then moved to Jiita to start his college education.

In 1984, he was sent to Rome to continue studying philosophy and theology. On November 3, 1985, he took his perpetual vows. After returning to Lebanon to receive his deaconal ordination on July 9, 1987, and his ordination to the priesthood on July 18, 1987, he continued his studies in Rome, specializing in moral theology.

Father Ibrahim overcame the obstacles of war and worked to educate future priests in Lebanon for 2 years as the director of the seminary of his order. In 1991, he was assigned as pastor of St. Elias Church in Cleveland, OH. Since his arrival, he has been appointed protopresbyter for the midwest region for the Diocese of Newton and was awarded the Interfaith Commission Award by Bishop Anthony Pilla.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in recognizing Father Ibrahim in his efforts to promote Christian unity and interreligious dialog. The parishioners of St. Elias and the city of Cleveland are lucky to have such a positive and dynamic force in their midst.

TRIBUTE TO THE LONG ISLAND
LADIES OF THE COURT

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 26, 1997

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the women of the Long Island Ladies of the Court. Recently, this four woman basketball team from Nassau County participated in the U.S. National Senior Olympics in Tucson, AZ. I am pleased to announce that our Long Island team made up of women between 55 and 60 years of age, captured the Silver Medal at the games—a very strong showing in a competition where over

10,500 men and women at least 50 years old from 48 States participated in 20 sports. We are very proud of our seniors and their basketball abilities.

I am a strong believer in sports, team participation and competition. I played basketball as a young girl growing up on Long Island and eventually played for Mineola High School. I experienced what recent studies have demonstrated that participating in team sports is essential for developing self-esteem and social skills in young women. Self-confidence grows with each successful lay-up, jump shot and slam dunk. And for seniors, exercise is a proven benefit—it slows down the aging process and helps people live longer and healthier lives. The Ladies of Long Island's excellent showing in the Senior Games clearly demonstrates that we can all benefit from team sports.

Mr. Speaker, I join today with my fellow residents from Long Island in offering a hearty congratulations to the Long Island Ladies of the Court and all participants at the U.S. National Senior Games. Great job to all of you!

AVIATION TAX PROPOSALS BAD
FOR AVIATION

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 26, 1997

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to my colleagues' attention the devastating impact this Taxpayer Relief Act will have on one single industry—the aviation industry. It is impossible to balance the budget and give taxpayers billions in tax cuts at the same time without raising revenues. Therefore, through massive tax increases, the Ways and Means Committee has decided to use the airlines, and the airline consumer, as the primary source of revenue. Of the total \$48 billion in tax increases over the next five years, \$34 billion, or 70 percent, will be raised from the aviation industry.

The airline passenger will now have to pay both a ticket tax and a new per flight segment head tax of \$2.00, which will progressively increase each year, yet the passenger will not benefit from the increased revenues. This is because the revenue raised from increased aviation taxes will be used to accomplish other unrelated tax cuts in this package. There is absolutely no relationship between the additional taxes and the programs that these taxes are supposed to support. The additional taxes will not fund new safety and security measures; they will not fund air traffic control modernization efforts; and, they will not fund critical airport improvement projects. In fact, under the budget agreement, federal funding of air traffic control operations and airport development will likely decline over the next five years as these new taxes are increased.

It is important to note that the increased revenues will be paid entirely by the airline passenger. It is the consumer who pays the ticket tax, the head tax, the departure and the arrival tax. However, the cargo waybill tax, which is paid by the profitable cargo airline industry, is simply extended in this tax package. Cargo companies, which fly hundreds of planes domestically and internationally each day at a profit, will not pay a cent more.

Last year, when the aviation excise taxes lapsed, the airline industry and the Congress began to examine how to improve the way the Federal Aviation Administration is financed and how to provide a more reliable funding stream. As the ranking member of the House Subcommittee on Aviation, I decided to take the lead in developing a fair and equitable "user fee" funding mechanism that would more closely align the funding of the FAA to the costs imposed on the system by the airlines. In addition, Congress created the National Civil Aviation Review Commission to study and recommend a new financing system. This Commission, which has a federal budget of \$1.2 million, is composed of representatives of all segments of the aviation industry and is chaired by former Chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Norm Mineta. However, a month before the Commission's expected recommendations, the Ways and Means Committee stepped in and raised aviation revenues without even waiting to hear what the \$1.2 million taxpayer financed Commission has to say about aviation revenues and spending. Although I will continue to draft my user fee legislation, and the Commission will continue its important work, this aviation tax proposal will make it extremely difficult to make the necessary changes in the aviation financing system. By raising aviation taxes to offset other tax cuts, this proposal widens the existing gap between aviation revenues and spending in the budget process.

In 1995 and 1996, the airline industry posted record profits. However, this success follows years of economic hardship when the airlines had to operate in the red, cutting service and eliminating jobs. If we take an additional \$5 billion from the airlines over the next five years, as we propose to do today, we will completely eliminate their profit margin. We will kill the airlines that are already struggling today and will dash all others' hope for future growth. Aviation is an integral part of our economy. Economic stimulus from aviation-related activities is now estimated to be \$700 billion dollars annually and is expected to grow to \$900 billion by the end of the century. However, this tax package today will take the air out of the aviation industry. This massive tax increase will once again bring the dark skies of economic hardship over the aviation industry, effectively grounding it.

A TRIBUTE TO RABBI MICHEL
TWERSKI

HON. THOMAS M. BARRETT

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 26, 1997

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I pay tribute today to one of Milwaukee's truly outstanding citizens, Rabbi Michel Twerski. On July 6, 1997, Congregation Beth Jehudah will gather with friends from Milwaukee and around the world at Milwaukee's historic Pabst Theater to pay tribute to Rabbi Twerski. I would like to take a moment to reflect on Rabbi Twerski's contributions to Milwaukee, the Chassidic community, and the world of music.

Rabbi Twerski has been an inspirational force in the local and international Chassidic